AN ECOCRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SELECT NOVELS OF R.K.NARAYAN, RUSKIN BOND AND KAMALA MARKANDAYA

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Abstract

Recently Ecocriticism is presented as a new branch of theory for analyzing art, science and literature. It is a mind developing theory as it enlarges our perceptions about environment. At present, ecocritics analyse literature from nature's viewpoint and reflects its outcome in bio-centric way. Ecocriticism is the environmental study that scrutinizes the relationship between literature and physical environment. Ecological anxieties have been the burning issues in literature for a long time. The interconnection between natural and social world is being vividly highlighted in modern time. It also concentrates the interconnection between man and nature. Literature and nature have continuously shared an intimate correlation in almost all culture of the Universe. It illustrates from social relations to natural relationships and portrays human being as mere a part of ecosystem. Literature turns a very crucial medium for writers to give emphasise to the degradation issue of the environment. People are now becoming aware of environment. Environmental equilibrium is very significant in this globalized world. The present research examines three magnificent novels: R.K. Narayan's *A Tiger for Malgudi*, Ruskin Bond's *The Room on the Roof* and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* in ecocritical perspective. This analysis encompasses on some research questions: What is the link between living beings and non-living beings in natural environment? Why do the novelists show at the issues of environmental disaster and crisis of nature? How an ecocritical reading can be attempted in the selected novels? The current study, *An Ecocritical Analysis of the Select Novels of R.K.Narayan, Ruskin Bond and Kamala Markandaya* claims the mighty emphasis on Ecocriticism which has vast significance on eco-consciousness in those selected novels of Indian English novelists like R.K.Narayan, Ruskin Bond and Kamala Markandaya. So it is the need of research to analyse those three selected Indian novelists with ecocritical perspective. The current investigation shows

the Ecocritical tools like Deep Ecology, Ecosophy and Social Ecology to explore the better perception of these selected novels. The selected novels express the harmonious relationship between animals (i.e. nonhuman beings) and human beings, the connection between community and natural surrounding that led a deep impact on the human mind and the portrayal of Indian rural and urban cultural life and how industrialization changes their lives. The research methodology used for this study is descriptive and analytical. It focuses on explanatory research that looks at different viewpoints through ecocritical theory in the following texts: R.K.Narayan's *A Tiger for Malgudi*, Ruskin Bond's *The Room on the Roof* and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*. The dissertation consists of five chapters: an introduction, three chapters analyzing the primary texts through the light of chosen approach and conclusion.

The introductory chapter is split into five sections. The first section explains the idea of ecocriticism in detail and discusses several research questions. Next section takes a closer look at the origin and growth of ecocriticism. To clarify this topic, it examines viewpoints from well-known scholars from American, Britain and India to better understanding ecocriticism. Scholars like William Rueckert, Cheryll Glotfelty, Lawrence Buell, Glen Love, Timothy Clark, J.W.Meeker, Vandana Shiva and Swarnalatha Rangarajan are included in this discussion. Third section focuses on various sub-fields of ecocriticism and its related ideas such as Deep Ecology, Shallow Ecology, Ecosophy, Landscpae Ecology, Ecofeminism, Social Ecology and Sustainability. The fourth section highlights the significant role of ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment) in advancing ecocritical studies. It also discusses how ASLE INDIA and OSLE INDIA have contributed to spreading ecocritical concepts among Indian writers. The final section wraps up with a discussion about ecocritical themes in Indian English Fiction. Writers and thinkers such as Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya,

R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, Ruskin Bond, Amitav Ghosh, Aravind Adiga, Kamala Markandaya, Mahasweta Devi, Anita Desai, Vandana Shiva, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have used nature and environmental topics to express their thoughts on social awareness regarding the environment.

Chapter two contains five parts. The introductory part highlights R.K.Narayan's concern for ecological balance along with Arne Naess's ecocentric view of deep ecology, which helps to explain the connection between humans and non-humans. In this part, the novelist seeks to bridge the gap between human existence and wildlife. The second part discusses how Deep Ecology began and evolved. Norweigan philosopher Arne Naess first used the term 'deep ecology' in 1973 and it gained popularity through the works of George Sessions and Bill Devall. This idea grew from a growing dissatisfaction with how materialism shaped people's views of nature. The text outlines Arne Naess's deep ecological perspective, which includes eight platform principles that challenge humanity's focus on itself over non-human nature. In the next part, it explains how deep ecology has criticized this self-centred attitude towards non-human nature. Naess's concept of deep ecology revitalizes the relationship between humans and non-humans, offering an ecocentric viewpoint that emphasizes the intrinsic value of all life forms to maintain ecological balance. Human society needs to recognize the importance of moral responsibility and ethical values towards nature in order to bridge the gap between the relationship of man and nature. The fourth part shifts the focus to the cultural and symbolic significance of tiger that represents the animal world. Different cultures have viewed the tiger as various representations. Over time, many forest communities and tribes worshipped tiger deities known as Bagh, Baghira and Bagheshwar. Additionally, it symbolizes strength, beauty and power in animal kingdom. However, in modern times, tigers face extinction due to human

actions like habitat destruction, poaching and food shortage. R.K.Narayan shares his concerns about this in *A Tiger for Malgudi (1983)*. Instead of killing tigers, we should relocate them to safer area where they can roam freely without threats from hunters and poachers. The closing part offers the text analysis with deep ecological perspective. Narayan promotes ecocriticism through his novel by illustrating the relationship between tigers and humans. The story warns readers about the serious dangers posed by the declining numbers of wild animals like tigers, highlighting the cruel actions that humans take against nonhuman beings.

Chapter three starts with an introduction that shows Ruskin Bond's concern for the ecosophical viewpoint. Bond describes natural elements like rivers, plants, animals, climate, and temperature and seasons those influence the main character Rusty and shape his thoughts. The conversation gradually shifts to the origin and development of ecosophy. Ecosophy is a type of literary genre that focuses on understanding ecology rather than just studying it scientifically. It explores ethical, psychological and social ideas in philosophy. This approach is vital for understanding our environment because it emphasizes the importance of human actions and individual beliefs alongside nature's existence. Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess and French psychoanalyst and post-structuralist Felix Guattari introduced this concept. Naess's ecosophy is based on personal beliefs about nature that vary from person to person. Everyone has their own ecosophy for guiding their life. His ecological philosophy points out the inherent value of nature and the importance of biodiversity. Every form of life should be valued for our survival's sake. On the other hand, Guattari's concept of ecosophy focuses on the creative abilities of people and explains the many connections within our environment. His idea is based on three types of ecologies: mental ecology, social ecology and environmental ecology. In this context, he describes how the natural environment impacts humans in various ways. These effects not only

influence today's generations but also help to shape the psychological identities of future ones. To tackle this issue, we must gain a deeper understanding of ecosophy. The next section of this chapter reveals Ruskin Bond's ecosophical concerns through the analysis of the novel, *The Room on the Roof (1956).* He highlights the urgent issues related to social, economic, psychological and ecological challenges. The novel draws from his own experiences in Dehradun, particularly in his small rented room on the roof, along with his friends. It captures the dreams and feelings of a young character named Rusty. The story explores how the environment affects Rusty, who reflects Ruskin Bond's own emotions and thoughts. Nature plays a significant role in shaping people and encourages them to live in harmony with their surroundings. Throughout his novel, Bond emphasizes the importance of protecting nature. He takes pleasure in feeling the wind, smiles at flowers and talks to trees. Bond believes that nature can nurture gentle human feelings like love and joy. The book connects mentally with the natural world, which has a lasting influence on him. The sights and sounds around him spark imaginative ideas for both Rusty and Meena Kapoor. Therefore, Bond aims to open a window for the readers so they can enjoy the natural exuberance.

Chapter four is also divided into five segments. The introductory segment highlights Kamala Markandaya's worry about serious social, economic and ecological issues. It also discusses O'Connor's view on ecological socialism, explaining how environmentalism has influenced capitalism today. The second segment covers the beginnings and growth of Social Ecology. Although the socio-ecological movement began in the 1960's, it gained momentum during 1980s and 1990s with the publication of Murray Bookchin's work. His ideas emphasize the importance of socialism while showing a strong concern for the environment. In his first essay, "What is Social Ecology?" he argues that all forms of social control need to find a way to change human's

careless and exploitative behaviour towards nature. The goal is to create a society where people live in harmony with nature without harming the environment. The third segment shifts the focus to how Indian rural life and urban life are depicted in Kamala Markandaya's novel, *Nectar in a Sieve (1954),* from a socio-ecological viewpoint. Rural culture is considered Indian's pride where agriculture plays a key role in its rural economy. She illustrates the simplicity of rural life and notes that the village has transformed into a city due to the establishment of the tannery. As a result, hardworking individuals who live simple lives in villages and work in agricultural land are slowly becoming endangered. In the fourth segment, the focus shifts to how industrialization affects the environment and influences both rural and urban life in India. With globalization and industrialization, many farms, fields and plants and animals that rely on agricultural land have been destroyed. Industrialization creates numerous job opportunities for educated people and has clearly boosted the nation's economy, leading to an improved standard of living. However, it is also causing rapid environmental damage and depleting natural resources. This chapter wraps up by discussing social and ecological concepts through an analysis of the novel, *Nectar in a Sieve (1954).* Markandaya addresses various social issues and environmental challenges faced by farming communities, such as unemployment, land acquisition, species extinction, deforestation, climate change and global warming. She also draws the attention of the people about the importance of environmentalism, globalization and non-capitalist perceptions for which social ecology is necessary to survive in the world.

The concluding chapter sums up the inspections, observations and arguments discussed in earlier chapters based on a comprehensive study of the chosen novels. It also emphasizes how well the ecocritical themes have been represented by these novelists. The illustrations from various novels have been discussed to showcase the entire ecological range. The study looks into the

ecological crisis and examines how human and nature rely on each other for survival. The research serves as a warning to humanity that over-exploiting nature can lead to serious consequences. Nature is closely tied to human life; if we don't protect nature, human life will be at risk too. Environmental balance is a major issue in today's world. We are facing environmental imbalance and destruction. The plant needs a healthy atmosphere for proper growth, development, sustainability and prosperity. Ecocriticism has brought more focus on how nature is viewed in literature. Nature often plays a key role in literary works, reflecting different atmospheres, moods, feelings and conditions. Novelists use images of environment to highlight the importance of maintaining ecological balance and the connection between man and nature. In our globalized world, people may have achieved great material success, but their actions are harming the plant's essential life support systems. Therefore, we all have the crucial responsibility to keep ecological balance so that all living beings can survive in the earth.

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